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Radio Message, 20 October 1985

Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin)

Revolutionary Council of National Resistance (CRRN)

Message from Commander Xanana Gusmao to Lord Avebury

Lord Avebury,

We received your message with great joy and emotion. The plea for us to continue with our struggle lives in our hearts and will pulsate in our veins until we have defeated the mighty aggressor and vile power occupying our homeland. It is in the name of the martyred people of East Timor and the brave guerrillas of Fretilin and the CRRN that we express our heartfelt gratitude for the unswerving support which you have devoted to our cause. The Maubere people's struggle is directed towards one objective, the liberation of our homeland. This struggle is in defence of our right to liberty and a path towards the democratic process of self-determination. We want peace and stability so that we can establish a free nation which is sovereign and independent.

The cowardly aggression against our homeland demands unimaginable sacrifices from our people. The continued occupation by Indonesia is leading to their gradual extermination. Therefore, just as in Europe when various nations struggled determinedly to defeat Hitler's forces, the people of East Timor draw strength from their children's blood, already spilt, and the solidarity of just men and women, pacifists and those who are in the forefront in defence of the universal principles proclaimed in the UN Charter. The righteousness of our struggle, the determination of our people and the fervour of international support, form a secure base from which we can singlemindedly maintain our resistance against the genocidal war waged by Jakarta. The attitudes of the so-called realists from other countries condone the crimes committed by Jakarta. On the one hand, they protect the selfish interests of their own governments, and on the other, they justify the violations perpetrated against our people. Their views fundamentally contradict the principles upheld by the UN and the resolutions adopted by it.

As for the 40th General Assembly of the UN, we must say that if the member states fail to respect unconditionally the universal principles that have been proclaimed and to put their resolutions into practice, this organisation will continue to be manipulated by force. Moreover, it will neither assuage the anxieties of the people nor function as a juridical body capable of solving the conflicts provoked by despotic regimes, such as the one in Indonesia. In its capacity as the authentic arbiter and a truly practical and efficient body in international legal disputes, it can free small and weak states from outside pressures, including the use of force.

It is true that Humanity has survived forty years without a conflict as destructive as the Second World War, whose forces were involved in a supreme international effort. It is true that in the forty years since its establishment, the UN has ensured that a people's right to self-determination and national independence could prevail. Thus, the gradual emancipation of territories under colonial rule has been guaranteed, a worthy achievement in its own right. Nevertheless, in our view, apart from a few exceptions, the colonised nations have turned to armed struggle in order to win their

independence. Within months of their victory, they have often been threatened by outside powers.

While not wanting to decry the good intentions and praiseworthy efforts of these individuals, we feel that the emergence of the Contadora or Lima groups in Central America, the Frontline States in southern Africa or even the Jordanian initiative, only serve to highlight the inability of the UN to solve certain conflicts. In our case, Indonesia, with all the means to exert pressure on us, has been able to continue with impunity its genocidal war against the defenceless Maubere people. They have also been able to assert their influence over other states who might have behaved more responsibly and with a greater sense of justice to defend their political principles.
For example, we notice how the Australians have sacrificed our rights in exchange for good relations with Jakarta and for access to the waters off the southern coast of East Timor for oil exploration. We even know of cases where governments sell arms to the Indonesians. For them, the war is only the means for making greater profits. As a consequence, our people pay with their blood. Meanwhile, other European governments, in fulfilment of economic agreements, lend their support to Indonesia, or at least they don't lift a finger in defence of the principles they claim to uphold. And even the UN representative handling our case has been so loyal to the Indonesians that he has denied the Maubere people a place at the conference table, thus leaving us bereft of our freedom of speech, the right to negotiate as the party whose interests are most at stake, on a subject which affects our lives, our very existence as human beings and as a people.

Despite everything, Lord Avebury, we have decided to continue with our struggle against the power which has in so cowardly and criminal a fashion occupied our homeland. Furthermore, we shall confront the belated or indifferent responses of other governments. Above all, we are conscious of the fact that this is our own struggle. We want to be free and independent.

In the face of the formidable difficulties surrounding our struggle, Lord Avebury, we recognise from the very depths of our souls the great and incontestable loyalty of our friends. We ask that they continue to support East Timor and to persuade governments to change their policies and support the UN Secretary General's efforts to find a just solution for a firm and lasting peace in East Timor. We would also like to add that, as far as we know, neither the UN nor its Secretary General has attempted to make contact with Fretilin. We would therefore fully agree to the suggestions you have presented to us. We feel that a meeting between Fretilin and the Secretary General would be a necessary development in our campaign and an important step towards ending the suffering of the Maubere people. With regard to the prospect of a visit to East Timor by the Secretary General, we declare that there are no preconditions for this on our part because we want to ensure that the Secretary General is free to fulfil the task entrusted to him by the UN General Assembly. We also declare that there are no preferences on our part regarding the choice of locale. The meeting could be held in Dili, or the Secretary General can go to any town in the interior of the country readily within our reach. If the Secretary General were unable to come to East Timor, we would be amenable to having a delegation of ours meet him in Darwin.

We are extremely grateful for the sentiments expressed by you, Lord Avebury, and we accept your kind offer. We hereby agree to the extension of a formal invitation to the Secretary General to meet with Fretilin leaders. The meeting could take place in East Timor or abroad, providing that, in the

latter case, the delegation can enjoy the security due to them during their travels.

We know ...[the message is garbled for a few words] the facts of this initative, but we have absolute faith in our belief that you, Lord Avebury, will spare no effort in support of the heroic effort of our people. Your affirmation, Lord Avebury, that no-one must consider ours a lost cause does not just provide moral comfort. It holds inestimable significance for us as we conclude the tenth year of our resistance to the power which has brutally occupied our homeland. As you have made us realise, one struggle may also lead to greater peace and stability for all human beings.

We ask you, Sir, to send our deepest gratitude to all the illustrious parliamentarians who have had no hesitation in taking the side of the Maubere people, providing them with vital support. The Maubere nation is small and weak, poor and defenceless, unprotected and ill-treated. For this reason, we need the continued support of other individuals, groups, organisations and governments - lovers of Peace, Liberty, Justice and Progress - so that we, the people of East Timor, can be our true selves, to master our own land and forge our destiny. Your support will be even more vital once the war has ended.

Forgive our presumption if we have made too many demands on you. However, we are certain that you and other illustrious men and women will continue to promote the campaigns already in progress, so that our people can take their rightful place in the negotiations which will affect their future.

The Maubere people will never forget these magnanimous gestures; this support is increasingly integral to their struggle for national liberation.

A free homeland or death!
Resistance is victory!
The struggle continues on all fronts!

With great esteem,

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, Commander-in-Chief, Falintil.

A copy of this message was sent to Peres de Cuellar, UN Secretary Ganeral, by Lord Avebury on 25 November 1985.